



## Short Safety Subject

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[www.rotc1.bragg.army.mil/SAFETY/SSS1.htm](http://www.rotc1.bragg.army.mil/SAFETY/SSS1.htm)

### Aggressive Driving Characteristics



According to a recent poll, almost 75% of all Americans said that they were driving more aggressively than they had been in the previous five years. This means that three-fourths of all Americans who drive will commit at least three and possibly more of the following during one trip to get where they are going when they said they would get there: run a red light or stop sign, tailgate, make an unsafe lane change, fail to signal properly, ignore railroad grade cross signals and yield signs, speed, or otherwise endanger persons or property. Are you a part of this 75% of driving America?

According to the National Center for Statistics and Analysis there were an estimated 6.3 million (yes, million!) police-reported crashes resulting in 3.2 million injured people, and over 41,000 deaths in 1999 alone. (Five-hundred and forty of these deaths were children under 5.) About 15,800 deaths were associated with alcohol and another 1600 attributed to drowsy driving and fatigue. In March of 1999, following extensive research into the causes of aggressive driving accidents, the Surface Transportation Policy Project (STPP) reported that aggressive driving is a factor in about 56% of all fatal crashes. Their definition of aggressive driving excluded crashes involving drugs and alcohol abuse and accidents that occurred at speeds under 80 miles per hour.

The following characteristics are generally agreed upon in defining aggressiveness on the road:

- Speeding.
- Tailgating.
- Failing to yield.
- Weaving in and out of traffic.
- Passing on the right.
- Making improper and unsafe lane changes.
- Running stop signs and red lights.

Where is aggressive driving the most common and what factors contribute to drivers feeling that they need to drive aggressively?

The STPP found that areas with increased congestion actually had a slightly lower aggressive driving death rate. This could be because lower speeds caused by crowding make crashes less

deadly. In addition, STPP found that “residents in states with the highest number of highway miles per person were 65 percent more likely to die in an aggressive driving crash.

About two-thirds of the trips taken in America are for recreation and errands; only 10 percent of American children now walk to school. Having to spend so much time in a car in areas where this is the only means of transportation leads to frustration and anger. Learning to deal with these two emotions is essential in avoiding aggressive driving. Find a way to get out from behind the wheel. This can sometimes be difficult in America where 29 percent of the population live more than a mile from a bus or train stop or have no access to transit at all. STPP reported that 40 percent of rural communities aren’t served by public transit at all. The same car that is supposed to free you to “see America” or “Zoom, Zoom” may eventually feel more like a trap you cannot escape.